

REMARKS

Claims 8-10 and 15-22 remain pending in the application, with claims 8 and 15 amended to independent form in accordance with the Examiner's indication of allowability, and claims 9 and 10 amended to correct antecedence. Claims 1-7, 11-14, 23, 24 and 28-43 are cancelled without prejudice. Claims 25-27 and 44 were previously withdrawn from consideration by the Examiner. No new matter is added to the claims with the amendments presented herein. It is believed that this Amendment and Response fully addresses each and every one of the Examiner's concerns. Where used herein below, numbered headings correspond to the presentation of the Examiner's concerns in the final Office Action of 11 March 2004.

1. Election/Restrictions

The Examiner has acknowledged Applicant's request to treat the election of Group 1, Species 1 as an election with traverse, further noting that claim 1 appears to be generic, and that as long as claim 1 is generic, all non-elected claims which depend on claim 1 will be considered when claim 1 is found allowable. Claim 1 is cancelled in this amendment; however, Applicant may pursue claim 1 and its dependent claims (as well as any other claims not presently pursued) in a continuation application.

2-9. Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103

Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner's various rejections of claims 1-4, 5-7, 11-14, 23 and 43 under one or more of U.S. Patent numbers 5,586,213 ("Bridges '213"), 5,012,868 ("Bridges '868"), 4,376,598 ("Brouns"), 4,651,825 ("Wilson") and 5,330,291 ("Heath"). However, in order to advance the immediate application to allowance, Applicant claims 1-4, 5-7, 11-14, 23 and 43 are cancelled without prejudice. Applicant may pursue these and other claims in a continuation application.

10-11. Claim Objections

The Examiner objected to claims 8-10 and 15-22 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but stated that the claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 8 and 15 are rewritten in independent form including the limitations of their respective base claims and

any intervening claims, and are thus believed allowable. Applicant therefore respectfully solicits a Notice of Allowance for claims 8-10 and 15-22.

CONCLUSION

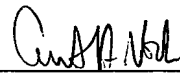
Given the above Amendment and Remarks, Applicant has addressed all issues raised in the final Office Action dated 11 March 2004, and respectfully solicits a Notice of Allowance for claims 8-10 and 15-22. Should any issues remain, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned attorney.

In light of the National Day of Mourning in honor of President Reagan on Friday, June 11, 2004, this response is timely filed. Per 37 C.F.R. §1.7, *"When the day, or the last day fixed by statute or by or under this part for taking any action or paying any fee in the United States Patent and Trademark Office falls on Saturday, Sunday, or on a Federal holiday within the District of Columbia, the action may be taken, or the fee paid, on the next succeeding business day which is not a Saturday, Sunday, or a Federal holiday."* Applicant thus believes no fees are due; however, should any fees be deemed necessary in connection with this Rule 116 Amendment and Response, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge deposit account 12-0600.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: _____


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